

# CHURCH HEALTH

Greetings in the precious name of Jesus! And greetings from the Church Health Community (CHC)! What a joy it is to be on a team of servant leaders who are committed to raising up healthy churches. The CHC team members are: Gary Kuehner, Ralph Owens, Jim Price, Ken Ogden, Wayne Houck, Rob Valentine, Scott Carr, and Ken Kalisz. We are in the process of adding two or three additional members to the team. At least one of these new members will be a “part-time” (partially compensated) pastor. Because of the increasing number of “part-time” pastors in our local churches, we believe this “voice” is important and needed on our CHC team.

The CHC continues to offer help to EC churches/pastors in five specific areas: evangelism, discipleship, refocus, revitalization, and church health assessment. These resources are offered free of charge to our EC churches. The following are brief descriptions/explanations of the five resources we offer.

EVANGELISM (A Story Worth Telling: How God Uses Your Story to Tell His Story). This training event, focusing on the importance of your story (how you came to know Jesus and how he has impacted your life), equips people to share their faith in a natural, non-threatening way. I (Gary Kuehner) will be sharing a condensed version of this material at the 2019 National Conference breakout sessions.

DISCIPLESHIP (4TD – Four Tier Discipleship). This template or model, based on the teaching approach of Jesus, encourages people to engage in four tiers or levels of discipleship: the crowd (congregational); the twelve (small groups); the inner circle (discipleship triads/quads); and the beloved disciple (one-on-one mentoring/coaching).

REFOCUS (How to Be a 1<sup>st</sup> Century Church in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century). This training event, based on Acts 2:42-47, is designed to help people focus/refocus on the Great Command (Matthew 22:36-39) and the Great Mission (Matthew 28:19,20). Six topics are considered: discipleship, fellowship, prayer, ministry, worship, and evangelism. I have used and continue to use a condensed version of this material to help local churches transition from an official board structure to a ministry council structure.

REVITALIZATION (The 7 Re's of Church Revitalization). Using biblical principles and real life experiences, this training event considers seven topics: restoring hope; refocusing on the mission; re-educating your people; restructuring to accomplish the mission; rejoicing in your success; reflecting on what you've done; and resolving to stay the course.

Revitalization groups continue to meet in many of our Districts. These groups use various resources (books, videos, etc.) to stimulate discussion. If you are interested in starting a revitalization group in your District and would like some guidance, please contact me at your convenience.

CHURCH HEALTH ASSESSMENT (Natural Church Development). Natural Church Development (NCD) is a process that measures (using a survey) eight quality characteristics that are essential to local church health: empowering leadership; gift-based ministry; passionate spirituality; effective structures; inspiring worship services; holistic small groups; need-oriented evangelism; and loving relationships. Follow-up coaching with a credentialed NCD coach is provided to assist in analyzing survey results.

Five CHC members (Gary Kuehner, Ralph Owens, Scott Carr, Jim Price, and Ken Ogden) are certified NCD coaches. As I write this report, four EC churches are at various stages of the NCD process, working with four of our coaches. A coach's meeting is scheduled for June 7, 2019.

The CHC oversees the work of the Christian Education and Youth Network Leadership Team, led by Rob Valentine. Rob has created a Facebook page for EC youth leaders (paid and unpaid) called EC YouthNet. Please encourage the youth leaders at your churches to join this group and take part in the discussions. A Friday after Thanksgiving (FAT) lock-in for youth is planned for Ozzy's in Leesport, PA on November 29-30. Rob is also working with Twin Pines to schedule a Youth Leadership Retreat.

The CHC also oversees the EC Men's ministry led by Wayne Houck. A men's gathering is planned for Saturday, September 21, 2019. This one day event will be held at Trinity Lighthouse Church in Royersford, PA.

CHC members met on January 8, 2019 to evaluate the work and structure of the CHC. The consensus was/is that we need to keep doing what we are doing. Things are going well. CHC members are making real connections with pastors and local church leaders.

Team members also expressed how thankful they are for the “think tank” that exists in the CHC. Members freely share their ideas and concerns. Teamwork makes the dream work!

I had the privilege of attending Exponential 2019 from March 4 to 7. During this conference I was able to take part in 11 interactive workshops on church health/growth/and assessment and church revitalization.

Future meetings of the CHC are scheduled for September 25, 2019, February 26, 2020, and September 23, 2020.

More and more churches are utilizing CHC resources. Praise the Lord! Our prayer is that God will continue to bless the work of the CHC as we continue our pursuit “to raise up healthy churches proclaiming Christ to a hurting world.

A Servant of the Savior,

***Dr. Gary Kuehner, Church Health Associate***